

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0428

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FOR SECRETARY VANCE AND ADMIN GILLIGAN FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SPOP, RP

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL

- PROBLEMS -- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD
- PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 107370 (B) STATE 197790

1. SINCE I HAVE BEEN AT POST ONLY SINCE EARLY JUNE THE FOCUS OF MY ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN -- AND WILL REMAIN FOR NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS -- ON ESTABLISHING THE TYPE OF CONTACTS WITH THE PHILIPPINE LEADERSHIP WHICH PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR A CONTINUING AND CANDID DIALOGUE IN FIELDS MENTIONED IN REFTEL A. I HAVE SO FAR MET AND BEGUN SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGES WITH THREE OF GOP MINISTERS HAVING RESPONSIBILITIES OR INFLUENCE IN REFTEL A FIELDS. EXCHANGES ABOUT THESE SUBJECTS WITH PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS HAVE NOT YET BEEN BEGUN -- IN CASE OF MRS. MARCOS BECAUSE OF HER PROLONGED ABSENCE FROM THE PHILIPPINES (JUNE 29 TO AUGUST 15).

2. ON THE BASIS OF CONVERSATIONS I HAVE HAD, HOWEVER, AS WELL AS THE PERFORMANCE OF RECENT YEARS, I AM IMPRESSED BY

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THE LEADERSHIP'S AWARENESS OF AND DETERMINATION TO RESOLVE THE FOOD DEFICIT PROBLEM IN THE PHILIPPINES ITSELF. IN 1972, WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS IMPORTING SOME 8 TO 10 PCT OF ANNUAL RICE REQUIREMENTS (STAPLE OF THE FILIPINO DIET IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY), GOP LAUNCHED THE "BOUNTIFUL HARVEST" PROGRAM (MASAGANA 99) -- A COMBINATION OF SUPERVISED CREDIT AND NEW PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND RELATED SERVICES. THE

RESULT HAS BEEN SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN RICE SINCE 1976 -- INCLUDING THE ACCUMULATION OF A 90-DAY RESERVE AND, THIS YEAR, THE EXPORT OF NEARLY 90,000 TONS OF RICE TO OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE 1978 CORN HARVEST IS EXPECTED TO BE ABOUT 40 MORE THAN 1977 AND, SINCE LAST YEAR, A PROGRAM BASED ON EXPERIENCE WITH THE MASAGANA 99 PROGRAM WITH RICE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO CORN. THIS LEAVES ONLY WHEAT AS A MAJOR FOOD GRAIN IMPORT; EVEN HERE, IN WHAT IS NORMALLY A TEMPERATE CLIMATE CROP, SOME INTERESTING EXPERIMENTAL WORK IS UNDERWAY.

3. WITH SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN RICE, AS WELL AS HOG AND POULTRY PRODUCTION, AND WITH EXPORTS OF SUGAR AND SOME EDIBLE COCONUT PRODUCTS, THE PHILIPPINES HAS BECOME ON BALANCE A NET (ALBEIT MODEST) EXPORTER OF FOODSTUFFS (EVEN ALLOWING FOR PL 480 IMPORTS). I SENSE A STRONG RESOLVE AMONG THE LEADERSHIP TO CONTINUE SUCH PROGRESS, COUPLED WITH A GENERAL RECOGNITION THAT THE PHILIPPINES WILL NOT BECOME A MAJOR RICE BOWL OR BREADBASKET FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

4. I HAVE NOT YET FORMED A SOLID JUDGMENT ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP'S RESOLVE TO MAKE A COMPARABLE DENT IN THE FIELD OF NUTRITION, WHERE THE PHILIPPINES' LEVEL OF CALORIE CONSUMPTION IS POOR IN COMPARISON WITH MANY OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES. I SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THIS IS AN AREA WHERE FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT -- AS WELL AS CONTINUED ASSISTANCE -- FROM THE U.S. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(AND OTHERS) WILL BE IMPORTANT.

5. CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE POPULATION EFFORT, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE ALMOST NEGLIGIBLE PROGRAM THAT EXISTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DECADE. SINCE 1970 A NATION-WIDE SYSTEM OF FIXED FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND INCORPORATED INTO THE GOP STRUCTURE. A RURAL OUTREACH PROGRAM IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING PUT IN PLACE. THE ESTIMATED BIRTH RATE HAS DECLINED FROM 3.4 IN 1970 TO 2.7 IN 1978. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, FURTHER GAINS THAT NEED TO BE MADE AND I CONSIDER THAT THE DIALOGUE CALLED FOR IN REF (A) WILL BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL HERE. IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE LEADERSHIP HERE, INCLUDING PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS, TO RESTATE ITS COMMITMENT TO POPULATION OBJECTIVES. APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING MINISTER SICAT TO HEAD THE POPULATION COMMISSION WAS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT MORE MAY BE NEEDED. IT IS REPORTED THAT THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS WILL REAFFIRM THE GOP'S COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAMS AND TARGETS IN A POPULATION WEEK PROGRAM SCHEDULED FOR MID-SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO JUDGE FAIRLY SOON THEREAFTER WHETHER THE LEADERSHIP HAS A CONTINUED DETERMINATION TO SUP-

PORT THE POPULATION PROGRAM.

6. MY INITIAL PERIOD HERE HAS ALSO ENABLED ME TO MAKE A FIRST-HAND ASSESSMENT OF OUR OWN ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES AS THEY RELATED TO FOOD PRODUCTION AND POPULATION GROWTH. WHILE OUR ACTIVITIES ARE MULTI-FACETED, COVERING A VARIETY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES, I CONSIDER THEM WELL DESIGNED TO ACCOM-

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0429

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (T H R O U G H O U T)

FOR SECRETARY VANCE AND ADMIN GILLIGAN FROM AMBASSADOR

PLISH THE GOALS SET DOWN IN REFTEL (A).

7. AS TO SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE (PARA 8 OF REFTEL (A)) ONE STEP WHICH WOULD HELP FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF THE LEADERSHIP HERE ON THE POPULATION SIDE OF THE FOOD-POPULATION EQUATION WOULD BE TO SEND PERIODICALLY TO THE PHILIPPINES (AND OTHER LDCS) SMALL TEAMS OF WORLD-RECOGNIZED POPULATION AUTHORITIES -- NOT ALWAYS AMERICANS, SOME FROM THE THIRD WORLD, AND PERHAPS UNDER MULTILATERAL AUSPICES (E.G. UN SYSTEM OR OECD) -- TO ENGAGE THE LEADERSHIP HERE IN A DIALOGUE ON THE SERIOUS RAMIFICATIONS OF POPULATION GROWTH. THE FORTHCOMING WORLD POPULATION SOCIETY MEETING IN OCTOBER SHOULD OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO START SUCH A DIALOGUE.
MURPHY

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